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The Cheerful Letter

Every place a church; every day the Lord's day; all events blessings; all joy thanksgiving; and all nature and life full of Good.—James Freeman Clarke.

Vol. XLII FEBRUARY, 1934 No. 8

THE VALUE OF MENDED THINGS

"And when he had gone a little farther, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship, mending their nets." Mark 1:19.

Mending nets was as homely a bit of work as darning stockings. Women agree that stockings must be mended, if they are to be used again. It was so with the nets. "Their wounds did smack of honour." With many a catch of fish they had fed the hungry. They bore many a service stripe from their work on the sea. So, grateful for past wear and hopeful of use yet to come, their owners sat down on the beach with fresh twine to repair the tatters.

Mended things have a value all their own. You have admired a beautiful silk flag without spot or stain, floating from a balcony. You have seen also, perhaps in some historic shrine, a flag with bullet holes. Men had rallied to it on the field of battle, they had marched behind it to victory till, fragile and worn, it was shot out of the hands of the color-bearer. Now a net holds together its faded fragments. This is the flag that stirs your blood.

Many things besides nets and flags need mending; and among these now and then is religion. Sometimes the inner life shows signs of wear. Spiritual values remain the same, but new nets may be needed in the service that lies ahead.

There is such a thing as mending our beliefs. When I was a child, I thought as a child; for how else can a child think? I thought of God as a tall, fine-looking gentleman, somewhat like my grandfather, who watched people and had their deeds put down by a recording angel in a book to be brought out at the judgment day. I thought of the Bible as a collection of pages dictated to certain penmen by the Holy Ghost. I thought of prayer as teasing God for things that people might win by insistence somewhat as spoiled children, by teasing, could win favors from weary parents. I thought of the future world as divided into two sections, heaven and hell, to one or the other of which a man was sent at death there to remain in eternal bliss or torment.

When I became a man, I put away childish things, not all at once, but by a gradual process. Earliest beliefs became worn, and truer conceptions replaced them. Some mature persons are just beginning the religious life. Others are beginning it over again. They sit on the beach, like James and John, and work upon their beliefs. So we have seen women make over children's clothing. They let out garments to make room for larger growth, strengthening them in spots worn thin by contact with the roughnesses of life. In the face of larger knowledge nets must be remade, if their owners are to use them again when they launch out into the deeps.

Here is a college student who has been instructed by some good woman in a Sunday school. He is now absorbed in a laboratory; but he does not throw religion out of the window because of the incompleteness of some of his childish beliefs. He is not stampeded. He knows that the eternal verities abide. He is convinced that a benign Will is at the foundations of being. He cannot believe that the universe with its marvels came into existence by chance any more than that the jig-saw puzzle on the table can arrange itself. It took intelligence to plan the puzzle. Is there not intelligent purpose behind the majestic picture?

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This young man believes that contact between human spirits and the Great Spirit is the highest form of worship. Mercy and truth come to mean more to him than they did in his early days. He acknowledges the worth of useful living and is drawn to the service of human need.

As we learn more of the universe and feel more deeply the meanings of experience, all of us in some respects modify our beliefs. A wise man said that Christianizing of life was accomplished not by delving into depths of dogmatic assertion, but by gathering and making our own all the worthy material of living. Honest faith need not fear truth; and honest souls can face readjustments.

Lead on, O King eternal! The day of march is come.

Second, we must mend our ways. Many of us have a touch of the Chinese, who, asked why he put no salt into bread, could find no answer beyond the iteration: "We put no salt into bread." We are creatures of habit. When a vision of all kinds of flesh was given to Peter and he was bidden to kill and eat, he answered that he never had eaten anything ceremonially unclean. It required a second vision to teach him that God was no respecter of persons. Either habits may become to us chains or they may serve as useful grooves, leaving our minds free for other matters. Some habits are assets; others are liabilities.

Habit takes certain persons to church. They may not agree with all that there is said, but they know the worth of worship. Some persons have the habit of reading the Bible. They have discovered that pasturing mind and soul on the finest, most exalted literature adds to one's spiritual vigor and enriches one's vital force. Some people give because of habit. Myriads, now striving to live in the spirit of the Master, are bearing sorrow bravely and lending a helping hand—all from habit.

Some parents who insist that their children shall brush their teeth, eat vitamines, and go to dancing-school—all good habits, so far as they go—leave character fixing habits to grow of themselves, like Topsy. Some mature persons are watchful about their weight and their tonsils, but careless as to their habits of worship. They ignore supreme values. The nets are torn, and they are left unmended. Once when I was fishing in Oregon, I slipped my net under a big find, but the fish fell out. My cautious motions had been of no use, for the net had holes. So men may make skillful efforts in vain, if they have not stopped to repair their equipment.

Here is a man outwardly as decent as Bunker Hill Monument. He never will bring up in the patrol wagon. But when a voice says: "Whom shall I send?" he answers: "Here am I. Send someone else." He is spiritually naked, and he is not ashamed. He is blind to his selfishness. He makes a livelihood, but he is not really living. He needs to mend his ways.

And, third, many of us need to mend our aims. The dawdler is crowded off the sidewalk. He gets nowhere. But the world makes way for the man with a purpose. A great deal is suggested of the one perfect life by the terse statement: "He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem!" Jesus lived every day with a far-reaching aim, the doing of his Father's will, the bringing in of his kingdom. We do not need to be told that he reached Jerusalem, and that there he finished the work given him to do. A steadfast intent is necessary if you expect to succeed in business, in politics or in any other pursuit.

"Not failure, but low aim, is crime."

In "Pilgrim's Progress," two men fell into the Slough of Despond and wallowed there. Both finally got out; but the man with a purpose climbed out on the side

toward the Celestial City, while the other emerged on the side looking backward.

It is said on good authority that the tadpoles once held a mass meeting. One tadpole reported that he had pushed his head above the water, taken a few whiffs of air, and seen new forms of life on shore. The other tadpoles shook their heads. "We never have breathed anything but water. This is a folly of youth!" They remained under water, swimming around; but the ambitious young fellow made his venture and became a frog. Moreover, he organized a new life around the pond, for high aim is contagious.

On the opening page of our Bible we read: "The evening and the morning were the first day." The order of creation is ever the order. The movement is from darkness into light. There is always the opportunity to mount into higher forms. The Lord God looked on the process and saw that it was very good. O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountains. Say unto business, politics and all other re-creations of man, Behold your God! Build with his help your own part of the finer world that is yet to be!—*From a sermon by Dr. Charles R. Brown.*

MY CREED

I think that many a soul has God within,
Yet knows no church, no creed, no word of prayer,
No law of life save that which seems most fair
And true and just, and helpful to its kin
And kind; and holds that act alone as sin
That lays upon another soul *its* share
Of human pain, of sorrow, or of care,
Or plants a *doubt* where faith has ever been
The heart that seeks with zealous joy the best
In every other heart it meets, the way
Has found to make its own condition blessed.
To lose God is to strive through life's short day
To comfort grief, to give the weary rest,
To hope and love—that surely is to pray.

—*Alice Stead Binney.*

BEETHOVEN'S LOVE OF NATURE

When only a boy he showed a great fondness for nature, and would often wander off from his uncongenial surroundings, and, under the shade of some trees, would study and listen to the music of nature, the rustling of the leaves, the sighing of the wind, and the humming of the insects. His dreamy moods increased as he reached manhood, and his greatest pleasure was to walk in the fields and woods. He arose at daybreak and worked till two o'clock, and then, after his dinner, he made the circuit of the town several times, no matter what the weather was. His figure was familiar everywhere. With long unkempt hair, careless attire, and hurried gait, he went striding along, constantly humming to himself, and, when he became excited by some new idea, waving his arms about in apparently a frantic manner. He always carried a notebook with him. "No man on earth," he writes, "loves the country more."—*From "Pictured Lives of Great Musicians," by Alethea B. and Rebekah Crawford.*

The hearts of the people of this continent were deeply stirred by the tragedy which terminated the flight of the Mollison's after a magnificent attempt to complete a non-stop journey to New York from Wales. It is a tribute to the stuff of which our modern pioneers are made that these two intrepid fliers pushed on for hour after hour until human flesh could stand the strain no longer, and with 39 hours of unbroken flying behind them crashed within a stones throw of safety. The ending of this flight is, too, a reminder that despite speedy means of communicating and rescue the trail-blazers of today—those intrepid characters who risk their lives to add to the store of human knowledge and the glory of human accomplishment—face dangers as great as the dangers which confronted the explorers of bygone eras. It is speed and the frailty of aircraft that endanger their lives today.—*Clipped.*

CORRESPONDENTS AND APPEALS

MRS. JOHN A. MCCADDIN, *Chairman*, 21 Ashfield Street, Roslindale, Mass.

A correspondent writing to the Exchange for the first time should always give as reference the name and address of her minister.

When a correspondent moves to a new address, notice should be sent to Headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., and to those persons who have been sending letters and reading matter.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of its magazine by addressing letters asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who disobeys this rule will be dropped from the list, and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by the Central Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to the Chairman of this Department.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

APPEALS

1. I have two boys, 14 and 19, who would like to have some good books to read. They love good reading. I would enjoy some magazines, quilt pieces, bits of crochet thread or anything of the kind. I have to stay home all the time on account of my husband's mother. She is 86 years old. Mrs. Zola Spencer, Rugby, Va.

2. Miss Esta Mae Plemons, Tellico Plains, Tenn., wishes that someone would send her some stamped pieces and embroidery thread. She lives with her grandparents as her mother is dead.

3. Mrs. George Lawless, R. 5, Stuart, Va., wishes to thank those who sent her the boxes at Christmas. She is not able to buy stamps to thank the senders. Any cheer would be appreciated as she is confined at home taking care of her husband who is ill.

4. Mrs. Maud Rakes, Buffalo Ridge, Va., also wishes to thank those who so kindly remembered her family at Christmas. She says that sugar and salt sacks would be of great help to her for her quilts.

5. Would someone please send my little girl some jig-saw puzzles after they are tired of them? She would like a picture book or anything that would pass the long winter days. I love to sew. Would someone send me some material? Mrs. Esther Griffiths, Sturgills, N. C.

6. Mrs. Gladys Dotson Cox, Dayton, Tenn., would enjoy some magazines and pieces for her quilts.

7. Master Carl Wright, R. 3, Ferrum, Va., would like some reading of any kind, especially magazines.

8. I have been a member of the Exchange for a long time, but I haven't heard from anyone for a long time. I would be so glad of some papers or books or anything the friends feel in their hearts to send to me. I am a shut-in. Cannot walk a step. I do love to get mail. It is so much company. Miss Lennie Spencer, R. 1, Lawsonville, N. C.

9. I am a widow and live with my daughter out here in the mountains. I am 73 years and have rheumatism so badly that I can hardly get about. I love to knit and sew and would be so glad if someone would send me some quilt pieces and sewing. Mrs. Susan Shoffit, Copeland, Ark.

10. I have been in awful bad health for the past three years. I can't get out much as I live in the mountains. I get awful lonesome. I would love some quilt

pieces, embroidery, crochet thread, reading or anything to pass off the lonesome hours. I love to sew and do any kind of hand work. Miss Mamie Greer, R.F.D. 1, Box 50, Rugby, Va.

11. It has been quite a while since I last heard from any of the *Cheerful Letter* friends and I want to thank them for all the cheer that has been sent us in the past. My husband had a stroke about a year ago and has been unable to talk since. He seems to be improving slowly, but he hasn't gained use of himself hardly any as yet. He has to have someone with him all the time to wait on him. There are just the two of us, my husband who is 65 and myself, 61 years old. We live way back in the country and sure do get very lonesome. We would appreciate any kind of cheer to help pass the long hours. I would appreciate bits of thread, pieces, or stuff to make rugs. Mrs. Elizabeth Tester, Archey, Ark.

12. Mrs. Cara Jones, Bina, N. C., would appreciate sewing material, embroidery, and magazines. She has eight children, two sons and six daughters.

13. Mrs. N. C. Farmer, R.F.D. 1, Rugby, Va., is the mother of one boy, one year old. She would appreciate toys for him and some sewing for herself.

THE GIFTS I ASK

(From "God of the Open Air")

These are the gifts I ask
Of Thee, Spirit serene:
Strength for the daily task,
Courage to face the road,
Good cheer to help me bear the traveler's load,
And, for the hours of rest that come between,
An inward joy in all things heard and seen.

These are the sins I fain
Would have Thee take away:
Malice, and cold disdain,
Hot anger, sullen hate,
Scorn of the lowly, envy of the great,
And discontent that casts a shadow gray
On all the brightness of the common day.

These are the things I prize
And hold of dearest worth:
Light of the sapphire skies,
Peace of the silent hills,
Shelter of woods and comfort of the grass,
Music of birds, murmur of little rills,
Shadow of clouds that swiftly pass,
And, after showers,
The smell of flowers,
And of the good, brown earth,—
And best of all, along the way, friendship and mirth.

So let me keep
These treasures of a humble heart
In true possession, owning them by love;
And when at last I can no longer move
Among them freely, but must part
From the green fields and from the waters clear
Let me not creep
Into some darkened room and hide
From all that makes the world so bright and dear,
But throw the windows wide
To welcome in the light;
And while I clasp a well-beloved hand,
Let me once more have sight
Of the deep sky and the far-smiling land,—
Then gently fall on sleep,
And breathe my body back to nature's care,
My spirit out to Thee, God of the open air.

—*Henry Van Dyke.*

The summer fallow is by no means a modern institution but has come down through the ages. The practice apparently was not always for the purpose of conserving moisture as the ancient injunction "Break up your fallow land and sow not among thorns" suggests the use of the fallow as a means of weed eradication.

Roots and vegetables mould and spoil very quickly if deprived of a circulation of air. Cellars, therefore, should be ventilated to secure the passage of air throughout every part.

THE VANISHING SHIP

If you should ever fall into talk with a certain venerable seaman of Cape Cod, during the course of the conversation he would probably inform you, with the air of one imparting regrettable tidings, that times are not what they used to be and hardly more than half-a-dozen ships have passed Highland Light since 1900. Highland Light, being one of the outstanding beacons on one of the great waterways of the world, at least half-a-dozen ships pass it every hour, according to your estimation. It might be, indeed, that you could count half-a-dozen at that identical moment. If you should venture to inform the Captain of this fact, however, you would be rewarded with a fine scorn. "Ships? Land alive, you don't mean ships! You mean steamers." Undoubtedly, you would protest this statement, but the forthcoming explanation would force you to admit that you were wrong and the Captain right. You meant schooners, or steamers. You did not mean ships.

For, according to the Captain, the only vessels worthy of the highest title in the seaman's varied nomenclature is a craft which is no longer seen, at least by the average person: the full-rigged ship, a vessel of three masts, each bearing its full complement of the square sails that have all but passed into disuse. Vessels of other rigs are schooners, brigs, barks, barkentines. Vessels propelled by other means than wind are steamers, motorboats, oil-burners. Only the three-masted square-rigged sailing vessel is a ship. If you accept this definition, you will be forced to agree that the Captain is right, and the ship has indeed almost vanished from the sea.

Coincidently with this disappearance of sailing vessels has come an equivalent waning of interest in ships and the sea, at least as the scene and implements of discovery and adventure. The sea has been tamed; ocean travel is a commonplace; if one would court peril, he must do so in the polar regions or in the air. For this reason, it is easy to forget that mankind's conquest of the ocean is a story richer in color and incident, more impressive in its display of daring, as it has been longer in its consummation, than even his conquest of the air. The exploration of interplanetary space presents a problem vaster in proportion, but similar in kind, to that which confronted the European of the Middle Ages who first began to think in terms of a navigable sea. It is difficult today to conceive of the fearsome barrier which the ocean presented to the progress of an expanding civilization, and to appreciate the magnificent heroism that has been required to surmount that barrier. It would seem an inevitable corollary of human experience that the greatest hazards in a new undertaking are assumed by those who, from their ignorance of the nature of that undertaking, are least equipped to deal with them. From this point of view, the history of the sailing ship has a profound significance which should not be forgotten. It is the history of mankind's long struggle with, and eventual triumph over, the most hostile element he has had to face.

The first transoceanic explorers were the Vikings, but they left only the vaguest records of their wanderings. Perhaps their chief contribution to the story of navigation lay in the tradition they established and in the ships they bequeathed to their descendants. These small open boats, with their single large sails and high prows ending in a carved dragon's head, literally laid the keels of the vessels which, centuries later, were to sail all the seven seas. William the Norman and his followers crossed the Channel to England in such ships, and Richard Cœur de Lion set sail for the Holy Land with his Crusaders in vessels which differed from them only slightly. As the long, low, custom-made motorcar of today is the direct descendant of the horseless carriage of thirty years ago, so the floating palaces of the present have been evolved by slow degrees from the high-prowed, open boats of Leif Ericson and his companions.

From their voyages to the Holy Land the Crusaders brought back with them

innumerable influences, not the least of which were modifications in ship building arising from their contact with Mediterranean craft. The various changes which took place during the next two centuries culminated in a squat little vessel with lofty stern, low waist, and high, pointed bow. The mainmast bore one large sail and a smaller tops'l above it, and a lateen, or triangular sail, slanted across a second mast at the stern of the vessel. The bowsprit pointed jauntily toward the skies, and below it hung an ineffectual bit of canvas called the spritsail, abolished only many years later. It was this type of vessel which carried Columbus and his immediate successors to the New World, and Elizabethan adventurers used one very like it.

During the three centuries following Columbus, ships played an all-important role in the history of the nations. Discovery, trade, and colonization increased with extraordinary rapidity. No one needs to be reminded of the long and bitter struggle for the supremacy of the seas which accompanied the more peaceful maritime pursuits of commerce and exploration. This struggle impelled the building of ever stouter and more practical ships, culminating at the beginning of the nineteenth century in a type of vessel of which Nelson's Victory and the United States frigate Constitution are good examples.

These ships differed considerably from the vessels in which Sir Francis Drake's men had routed the Armada, some two hundred years previously. The improvements were constantly in the direction of larger sail area and flatter decks. The spritsail was abolished and the jib introduced. The lateen sail had vanished, and the spanker took its place—a fore-and-aft sail on the mizzen mast, much like that to be seen on any schooner today. The first two sails on each mast, the courses and tops'ls, were of enormous spread, and above them the t'gallants'ls and royals lifted a diminishing sail area toward the sky. The bows of these ships were round as apples, the beam, or width, was broad, and the stern was square and cumbersome. These broad, blunt hulls literally pushed their way through the resisting water, churning up a broad bow wave, and affording the wind and the sails as little help as possible.

Of this type were the packets, or first passenger ships to ply the North Atlantic. Accounts of immigrant travel in these early ships read like nightmares. As passenger travel increased, vessels correspondingly improved, and well before 1840 regular lines of packets were established, plying between England and America, leaving according to schedule as faithfully as any ocean liner of today, and offering comfort and even luxury to their passengers.

It remained for the nineteenth century to witness perhaps the most remarkable drama that has ever been played at sea, a drama of intense rivalry whose interest is heightened by the fact that it was entirely peaceful. This rivalry was between nation and nation, between the old and new seamanship, between steam and sail. It ended inevitably with the defeat of sail, but only after a brilliant interval which witnessed the triumphant appearance of the swiftest and most beautiful of all sailing vessels, the clipper ship.

Today the clipper is regarded more as a symbol than a fact. Her name is given to trains, to motorcars, to airplanes, always as an indication of especial beauty, trustworthiness, and speed. This tacit recognition of her distinguishing characteristics is also a recognition of her peculiar contribution to modern times, for it was the clipper ship which taught people to hurry. Before the clipper, speed in transportation was a chimera. Ships had jogged along at much the same rate for generations. With the discovery of gold in California, the demand for speed became imperative. As an answer to that demand, the first clipper was built and launched; and, during the decade following this event, the age of sail reached its splendid climax.

As contrasted with her predecessors, the clipper was a long, slim vessel with sharp, pointed bow and enormous sail area. It was predicted of the first clipper

that any ship built on such lines would inevitably founder, but she failed to fulfill this expectation. Further, the captains who sailed the clippers soon inaugurated a more daring type of seamanship than had ever been known before, frequently padlocking the running rigging so that timid hands could not shorten sail during a howling gale or at night. Many of the great clippers were engaged in the tea trade, and the perishable nature of the cargoes assured the best price to the ship which beat its competitors to port. Each trip became a breathless race, in which the chugging paddle-wheel steamers of the day were hopelessly outsailed.

In the clipper ship era, people had their eyes on the sea as they have their eyes on the sky today. Each new record breaker was hailed with acclaim. Her captain and builders shared the honors of the ship's phenomenal performance. And, as the present period in the history of aviation will no doubt be symbolized to future ages by a single figure, so the glory of the clipper ship may be typified by the man to whom it was largely due: Donald McKay. From McKay's shipyard, in Boston, were launched ships which broke record after record on runs to Europe, California, and Australia. The happily named Flying Cloud was one of the first of these, and she may be taken as the symbol of them all. The world rubbed its eyes when it learned that she had made the run from New York to California around Cape Horn in eighty-nine days. On a subsequent trip, she bettered her own time by several hours. This record has not since been broken by any ship of sail.

The Civil War rudely curtailed the building of these merchant ships in America, and steam ultimately drove the clipper from the seas. Billowing canvas gave place to smoke-stacks, and now, hardly half a century later, the sailing ship has become a memory. But her contribution to the welfare of humanity, and the part she has played in building western civilization, are beyond all estimate. Indeed, without the sailing ship, the Americas would not have been known to the white man at all. Sail is as old as civilization itself; the usurper, steam, has been in use a bare hundred years. The heroic story of the sea has been written, written almost wholly in terms of sail.

It would appear, then, that the Captain has some justification for his statement. The glory of conquest has passed from the sea to the air, and "ships" sail past Highland Light no more.—*Christian Science Monitor.*

LIFE'S MIRROR

There are loyal hearts, there are spirits brave,
  There are souls that are pure and true;
Then give to the world the best you have,
  And the best will come back to you.

Give love, and love to your life will flow,
  A strength in your utmost need;
Have faith, and a score of hearts will show
  Their faith in your word and deed.

Give truth, and your gift will be paid in kind,
  And honor will honor meet;
And a smile that is sweet will surely find
  A smile that is just as sweet.

For life is the mirror of king and slave;
  'Tis just what we are and do;
Then give to the world the best you have,
  And the best will come back to you.

Madeline S. Bridges.

The chief constable of a small English town was also an expert veterinary surgeon. One night his telephone bell rang.

"Is Mr. Blank there?" said an agitated voice.

Mrs. Blank answered yes, and inquired:

"Do you want my husband in his capacity of veterinary surgeon or as chief constable?"

"Both, madam," came the reply. "We can't get our new bulldog to open his mouth, and—there's a burglar in it."—*Boston Transcript.*

CANDLEMAS DAY

From a very early, indeed unknown, date in the Christian history, the second of February has been held as the festival of the Purification of the Virgin, and it is still a holiday of the Church of England. From the coincidence of the time with that of the "Februation" or purification of the people in pagan Rome, some consider this as a Christian festival engrafted upon a heathen one in order to take advantage of the established habits of the people; but the idea is at least open to a good deal of doubt. The popular name "Candlemass" is derived from the ceremony which the Catholic Church observed on this day: namely, a blessing of candles by the clergy, and a distribution of them amongst the people, by whom they are afterwards carried lighted in solemn procession.

The festival, at whatsoever date it took its rise, has been designed to commemorate the churching or purification of Mary; and the candle-bearing is understood to refer to what Simeon said when he took the infant Jesus in his arms and declared that he was a "light to lighten the Gentiles." Thus literally to adopt and build upon metaphorical expressions was a characteristic procedure of the Middle Ages.

Robert Herrick alludes to the customs of Candlemass Eve: it appears that the decorations put up in houses at Christmas were now removed.

Down with the rosemary and bays,
Down with the mistletoe;
Instead of holly now upraise
The greener box for show.
The holly hitherto did sway,
Let box now domineer,
Until the dancing Easter day
Or Easter's eve appear.

There is a curious custom of old standing in Scotland in connection with Candlemass Day. On that day it is, or lately was, a universal practice for the children attending school to make small presents of money to their teachers. . . . Another old popular custom in Scotland on this day was to hold a football match, the east end of the town against the west, the unmarried men against the married, or one parish against another. "The Candlemass Ba'," as it was called, brought the whole community out in a state of high excitement.

Considering the importance attached to Candlemass Day for so many ages, it is scarcely surprising that there is a universal superstition throughout Christendom, that good weather on this day indicates a long continuance of winter and a bad crop, and that its being foul is, on the contrary, a good omen. Sir Thomas Browne, in his "Vulgar Errors," quotes a Latin distich expressive of this idea:

Sil sol splendescat Maria purificante
Major erit glacies post festum quam fuit ante;

which may be considered as well translated in the popular Scottish rhyme:

If Candlemass Day be dry and fair
The half o' winter's to come and mair;
If Candlemass day be wet and foul
The half o' winter's gane at Yule.

In regard to the tradition of the groundhog's appearance on Candlemas, Chambers' says: "In Germany there are two proverbial expressions on this subject: 1.—The shepherd would rather see the wolf enter his stable on Candlemass Day than the sun. 2.—The badger peeps out of his hole on Candlemass Day, and when he finds snow, walks abroad; but if he sees the sun shining, he draws back into his hole. It is not improbable that these notions, like the festival of Candlemass itself, are derived from ancient times, and have existed since the very infancy of our race."

In the United States the woodchuck or groundhog of all the animals most closely resembles the badger in habits, and so has taken his place as a weather prognosticator.

—*From Chambers' Book of Days.*

It pays to be nice to the people you meet on the way up, for they are the same people you meet on the way down.

Among the foods eaten in Hawaii are 70 different kinds of seaweed.

WITH OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

QUARANTINE CAMP

HILDA RICHMOND

"Why, it looks as if somebody had been living in our old sugar house!" cried Harold as the boys and girls from the Sunshine Class held their first outing and picnic for the year. The weather had been rather cold and rainy, and school duties had been strenuous, so the old sugar house had not been explored since the previous fall when they used the old stove in it to cook some corn on a day when green corn furnished the main part of the refreshments.

"I should say so," said Clementine surveying with great distaste some old pans and kettles and soiled rags in one corner. "Let's cook our meat over a fire out of doors until this place can be cleaned out."

It was an exquisite day in spring so cooking out of doors was entirely possible. When the fire was burning brightly the boys took sticks and placed the old rags and clothing of the sugar house on the blaze, but nothing else was done to put the house in order where Grandfather Bates used to turn out such delicious maple sugar and taffy. As it was the first picnic they would enjoy every moment and think of cleaning the house afterward.

"My! was anything ever so good!" said Richard cutting a fat weiner open to put into a puffy roll. "Look at the people coming through the woods! I hope they are not hungry, for we would have to share with them and we are all starved."

"Yes, this is the place," one man was saying as they approached the sugar house. "Have you young people been in this house this morning?"

Of course the story came out and the men in the party shook their heads dolefully. "Now, listen," said one of them who seemed to be the leader. "Don't go in the house—I guess we'll leave one man here to see that you don't—and don't stray from this point until we come back. Remember!"

"Well," said the two teachers in charge of the class, "since they did not explain we might as well continue our picnic lunch and wait to see what they want. Mr. Green took some food to the man standing near the sugar house but he waved him away. "Go back and stay where you were told to stay!" he said sharply.

In less than an hour it was all explained and a much larger number of people came through the woods with anxious faces. The fathers and mothers of the boys and girls were in the company, and they truly looked sad.

"An itinerant group of people used this sugar house and two of them are now ill with smallpox," explained the leader. "We will have to put all you children and your teachers in a quarantine camp, and we've selected an unused farmhouse near here for the place. You will have to stay within bounds until all danger is over."

Well, sooner than you would think, the young people were comfortably settled in a ramshackle old farmhouse and after the first excitement was over they had to make plans to put in their spare time. They could bathe and fish in the river, but could not roam through the woods. They could cook and eat to their hearts' content, but cooking and eating do not take up long days entirely. They could read the magazines their parents brought them and play simple games they invented, but that was not enough.

"Let's have a Bible school," proposed Henry one day. "A regular school out of doors."

And so it was that the birds and the squirrels heard hymns of praise and prayers and memory verses and Bible readings for periods each morning and afternoon. With games and feasting and their little vacation school time passed very pleasantly though they longed for home, of course. And then one day the man who had placed them in quarantine camp came to say that the people with smallpox had not been in the sugar house at all, but in a deserted house farther down the river and they could all go home at once.

"Do you know I'm rather sorry it's all over," said Harold. "I wish we could have stayed a week or so longer to finish all the things we had started."

"Well, why not?" said the fathers and mothers." This is a great experience for the young people, and they are getting as much out of it as if we were able to send them to an expensive summer camp, so let them stay longer. We can come out now to visit them and there is no danger and no restraint."

And so it came about that Quarantine Camp became very popular and when the Sunshiners were all back at home another group from the Sunday school took up vacation play and work there in the old house and from then on until fall it held boys and girls who got pleasure and profit from life in the open.

"Those people, whoever they were, who camped in the old sugar house, did us a good turn," said Henry as they packed up to leave.

"Yes, and they taught us to have a good time with cheap and easily found things," said Ruth, "and that is the best of all."

—*Herald of Holiness.*

THE CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW

It was when we were all quite nursery children—a long time ago, I am sure; two years since, at the very least—and it began, as nurse said afterward, because we would not play at proper games like other children.

Partly that is our own fault, because Patricia always wants to take the lead, and always will, and, of course, it leads to squabbles; and, I dare say, I am often very aggravating, and Bobby is such a slow, arguing boy, and Annie is as tiresome as tiresome can be, with crying over everything, and Paul is sometimes so very odd and obstinate. But I think it is also nurse's fault, because being the strictest person in the world, she will not let you do everything you might want to do.

We consider nurse a very cross person. It is all very well to say that it is we who are naughty, but we are not always naughty; and she *is* always cross. Her aprons are as stiff as the nursery tea-tray, besides being the same plain shape, and she will wear the tightest and sternest caps that ever were seen.

I remember Bobby being put in the pound for saying, in a very serious manner, that he did not want to wish anything, wicked, especially on Sunday, but he *did* wish that something would soon happen to nurse's best cap. He said it looked so hard; her caps were all strictish, but her Sunday caps were savage.

It may not be very agreeable to the feelings to tell about one's punishments, but it may have to be told all the same. Our large punishment is to be sent to bed, and our small is to be put in the pound, which is really behind the screen. It is a very degrading thing to be put there; it is much worse than a corner because a corner is lighter, and you can sometimes look over your shoulder. . . .

We have heard ladies tell mother that nurse is a treasure, but she does not comb *their* hair nor put them to bed. But still we know that she is really very good. But the thing that we think the worst of all about nurse is that there could not possibly be any person in the world with less imagination than she has. She never could see what pleasure we find in sitting in a ring under the table and imagining things, which she called telling untruths. She could not see what pleasure there was in sitting on the floor at all, because no one who has never made a practice of it *can* know how nice it is.

"Why you cannot sit on your chairs, instead of floors, like pagans in a pagan land, is more than I can tell," she used to say.—From "The Gentle Heritage," by *Frances E. Crompton.*

Be not afraid to pray, to pray is right:
Pray if thou canst with hope, but ever pray
Though hope be weak or sick with long delay;
Pray in the darkness if there be no light.
And if for any wish thou dare not pray
Then pray to God to cast that wish away.

—*H. Coleridge.*

That God whose Mind is the foundation of all law and order in the universe, and the ground of all spiritual values wherever they emerge in any world, has revealed His Heart and Character to us in a concrete personal life like our own. . . . Here at a temporal focus point of history there came One through whose life the essential nature of this spiritual God could break forth and give us light and guidance. He no longer seems remote and awesome with His immensities. He is near and simple and tender. He no longer seems vague and abstract. He is a Person with a mind and heart and will. He is touched by every human need. He is quick to feel and understand the human heart. He loves and suffers. He forgives and pardons. He reveals a new way of life, a new spirit, a new type of person, a new redemptive power, a new victory over death and sin, He shows that grace is superior to justice, that love conquers hate, that life is lord of death, that self-giving, not sovereignty, is the mark and badge of the divine nature. I think of God, then, as like Christ. When I turn to Him, He seems no far-away-sky-hidden Deity. He seems to me warm and tender, full of grace and truth, as infinite as the sweep of the universe, but as personal and loving at the Galilean Friend of Men.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and
Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer
than hands or feet.

—*Rufus M. Jones.*

When we ask a friend for his candid opinion, what we really want is his candied opinion.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

MRS. HARRY A. STEVENS, *Chairman*, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.
MISS ETHEL L. HERSEY, *Secretary*, Hingham, Mass.
MISS EDITH L. JONES, *Treasurer*, 11 Dana Street, Cambridge, Mass.

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To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, and to give to those living far from a church some of the inspiration of the printed word by the publication of one good sermon, or similar article in each issue of the *Cheerful Letter Magazine*. Only such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed upon by all churches are printed.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of correspondence with a teacher.

To establish Circulating Libraries in isolated communities, schools, and colleges in rural and mountain districts where public libraries and other educational privileges are not available.

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